

Special Issue

The MLF 50

The Fourth Annual MLF 50: The Top 50 Law Firms in Marketing and Communications

Now More Than Ever, Marketing Should Take Center Stage – and for 50 Firms It Has – I’m a Believer!

By Elizabeth Anne ‘Betiayn’ Tursi

With the current downturn in business, one would think that perhaps marketing and communications might be taking a holiday. The good news is that for 50 firms, marketing is front and center. To say the least, it has been an interesting year. We have all read about the layoffs, the restructuring of some firms and even the demise of others. What went wrong isn’t important. What is important is that many firms are utilizing the capabilities of their marketing and communications departments in ways that they believe can capitalize on the downturn and even create profits. I want to say that it doesn’t really matter where a firm ranked on this list. What does matter is that the firms on the list are examples of how first-class, first-rate marketing and communications can move the agenda of a law firm forward in a strategic manner and in so doing become invaluable to the success of the firm.

In formulating the criteria for this year, special emphasis was placed on firms that did more with less. While some law firms on the MLF 50 have not decreased their budgets and, in fact, many at the top of the list have increased their budgets, others have developed creative strategies that didn’t “break the bank.”

Once again this year, many firms submitted detailed descriptions of their marketing, business development and communications programs. Some of the firms that are listed provided no information. As with past practice for those firms, extensive research was conducted. It should be noted that while I would have liked to feature examples of the ad campaigns that some firms created, this particular cover story is about strategy and the success of that strategy. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Bill Crooks of Priority Search and a member of our Board of Editors for assisting me with follow-up on several firms.

Herewith, the submissions of the Top Five firms in this year’s rankings.

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RANKED FIRMS					
MLF Rank	Firm Name	AmLaw 200 Rank*	MLF Rank	Firm Name	AmLaw 200 Rank*
1	Proskauer Rose	39	26	Holland & Hart	153
2	K&L Gates	28	27	Bingham McCutchen	30
3	Jenner & Block	79	28	Carlton Fields	179
4	Goodwin Procter	42	29	Richards, Layton & Finger	N/A
5	Duane Morris	71	30	Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe	27
6	Weil, Gotshal & Manges	10	31	Foley Hoag	158
7	Thompson & Knight	122	32	Baker & McKenzie	3
8	King & Spalding	40	33	Foley & Lardner	32
9	Winston & Strawn	34	34	WilmerHale	17
10	Pryor Cashman	N/A	35	Alston & Bird	54
11	Schulte Roth & Zabel	67	36	Reed Smith	23
12	Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel	90	37	Morgan, Lewis & Bockius	12
13	Dechert	25	38	Nixon Peabody	64
14	Leonard, Street & Deinard	N/A	39	Howard Rice	N/A
15	Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff	N/A	40	Mayer Brown	9
16	Latham & Watkins	2	41	Arnold & Porter	55
17	Debevoise & Plimpton	33	42	Chadbourne & Parke	97
18	Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper & Scinto	197	43	Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice	94
19	Patton Boggs	85	44	Hughes Hubbard & Reed	103
20	Ropes & Gray	31	45	Dickstein Shapiro	82
21	Crowell & Moring	113	46	Shook, Hardy & Bacon	82
22	Schiff Hardin	114	47	Covington & Burling	61
23	Manatt, Phelps & Phillips	111	48	Quarles & Brady	127
24	Jones Day	4	49	Fish & Richardson	72
25	Goulston & Storrs	187	50	Step toe & Johnson	77

*Ranking in 2008 AmLaw 200 N/A=Not listed on AmLaw200 Rankings